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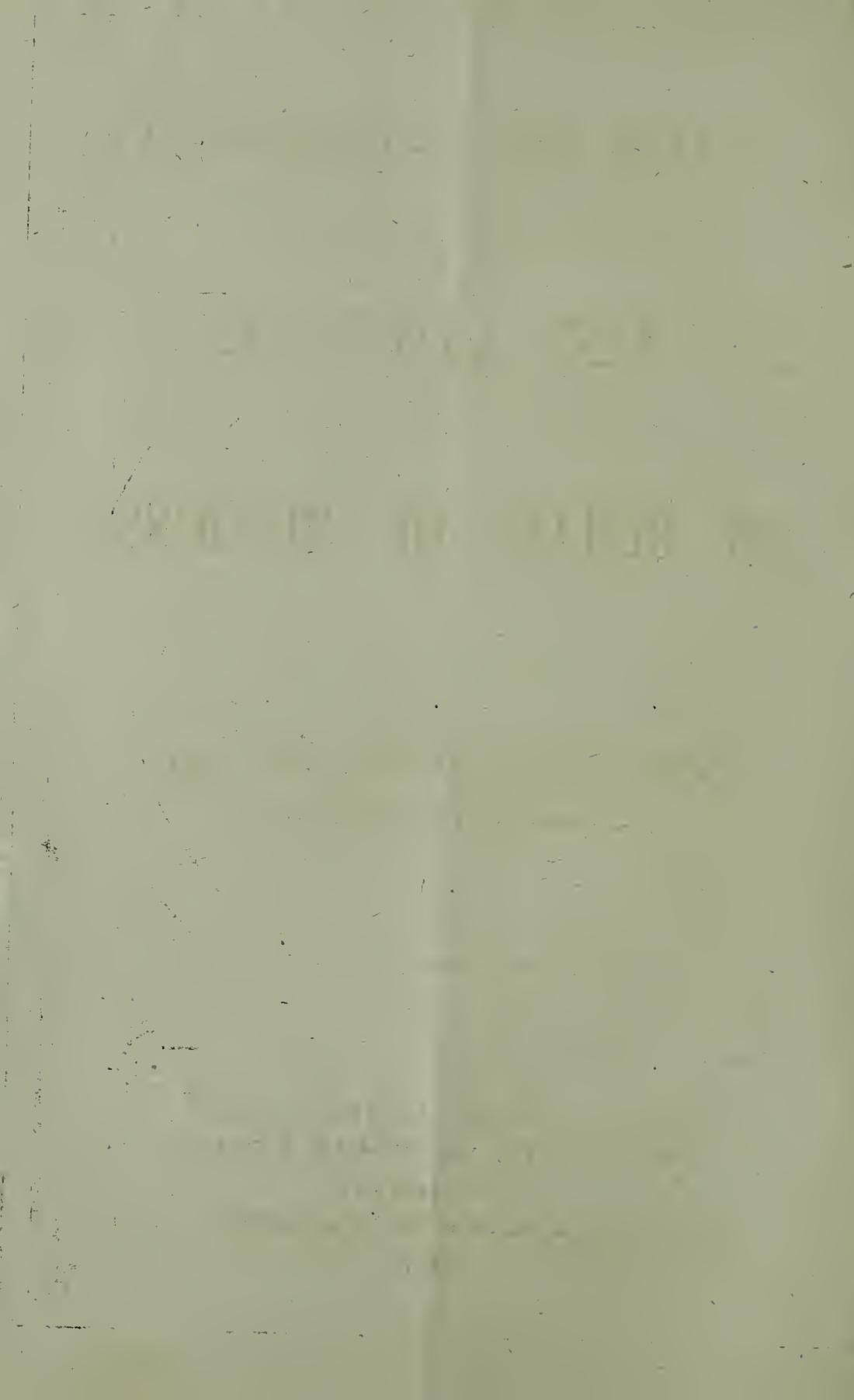


AN APPEAL IN BEHALF OF MISSIONS.  
BY REV. W. S. EDWARDS, D.D.

METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSE.

805 BROADWAY N.Y.

TRACT DEPARTMENT.



4504

ABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY:  
AN APPEAL  
IN BEHALF OF MISSIONS.

BY  
REV. W. S. EDWARDS, D.D.,  
*Of the Baltimore Annual Conference.*

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NEW YORK:  
NELSON & PHILLIPS.  
CINCINNATI:  
HITCHCOCK & WALDEN.

1878.

A very faint, blurry background image of a classical building with four columns and a triangular pediment, centered on the page.

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## APPEAL IN BEHALF OF MISSIONS.

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“And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability.”—MATT. xxv, 15.

THE distribution of talents in the parable is unequal, because the ability of the servants receiving them is unequal. A distribution on any other principle than the one adopted—“to every man according to his several ability”—would have been unjust alike to the servants and to their Lord. As ability determined the original endowment of each one, making the reason for the Lord’s discrimination in giving “unto one five talents, to another two, and to another one,” so it measured responsibility for the use of the talents severally conferred. As one received more than another because of larger receptive capacity, so more was expected of one than another because of greater executive ability. There was no unfair advantage taken of, or degradation put upon, him who received one talent. The smallness of the assignment answered to the smallness of the

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man. With two talents he would have been overstocked; with one he was sufficiently but not excessively furnished. His accountability, like that of the other servants who respectively had two and five talents, was proportioned to his power to use and produce. If he had less, he was called to do less. Yet faithfulness in doing what he could was claimed, and would not lose its reward.

This leading truth of the parable, that ability makes and measures responsibility, that resources and results are so related that one must balance the other, has almost endless applications. Its bearings touch every department of life, and every stage and phase of progress. It is elucidative of both the achievements and the further possibilities of civilization. As a great law, communities no less than individuals are amenable to it. Nations gain or lose, go backward or forward, live or die, as they regard or disregard it. We deliberate and decide upon duty and desert, we adjust obligation and define fidelity, according to this principle, which the parable of the talents so clearly and cogently presents.

That the Churches of Christendom—I refer to the denominational organizations whose sum is the visible Church of Christ, rather than

to local congregations of Christian believers—that the Churches of Christendom come under this law none can doubt. There is no forbidden straining of the parable when the servants, into whose hands the Lord delivered his goods for careful custody and profitable use, are made typical of them; and the law of responsibility, which the parable discloses, fits in with their conditions and peculiar functions so perfectly as to be unmistakably a law for them. Their loyalty to the great commission, under which they exist and act, depends upon a conscientious and constant reference to it. Their relation to the common work to which they are called and consecrated will be appreciated only as they appreciate it. On earth and in heaven it is the rule by which service is apportioned, and the criterion by which service rendered is valued.

Christianity, assuming for itself the highest rank as a religion for the world, seeks universal propagation. Refusing all alliances or compromises with other religions, it proposes to displace them. It is militant until all opposition is swept away. Max Müller, classifying the religions of the world as non-missionary and missionary, rightly puts Christianity in the foreground as theoretically and practically the

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most missionary of all religions, remarking : “ Its very soul is missionary, progressive, world-embracing ; it would cease to exist if it ceased to be missionary—if it disregarded the parting words of its Founder, ‘ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : . . . . and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.’ ” It cannot stop short of the conquest of the world for Christ without self-immolation. By its constitution, all its methods, labors, and successes look to this.

Our Churches visibly represent Christianity in its aim and purpose to push itself onward until opposition either disappears or is reduced to impotency. They are organisms in which the spirit of Christianity resides, vitalized by the unceasing, ever-expanding activity of that spirit into aggressive agencies for making it *de facto*, as it claims to be *de jure*, the universal religion. The grand office of the Church is to witness for the saving truth of Jesus until that truth is known by every human being. It is well said, “ The Church is not a close corporation, as the ancient Pharisees supposed, its business in this world being solely to carry out the great commission. And no purity of ortho-

doxy or perfection of organization can make that a Church of Christ which refuses obedience. There may be every thing else but this—creeds, rituals, traditions, machinery, wealth, learning, numbers, architecture, music, millinery, and all manner of human upholstery, as substitutes for a Church, but to take no part in the evangelization of the heathen is to be out of sympathy with Christ, and out of harmony with his plans." On New Testament principles the rejection of every plea for recognition and fellowship as a true Church of Christ is required, whenever this paramount function is denied and discarded.

After all, the test of a true Church is more a practical than a dogmatic or historical one ; it is an earnest devotion to the world's salvation. Churches can show no better reason for their right to be, no more unanswerable argument in vindicating their legitimacy of descent and succession from the apostles and primitive Church.

All Churches, acting under the charter of Christianity, professing to hold their credentials from the Lord Jesus, are thus presumed to be *missionary* Churches, because Christianity itself is essentially missionary. The governing idea with them must be bringing

the world to Jesus, because it is the central idea of the Gospel, God's message of reconciliation to guilty, dying men. Their validity and authority expire when this idea does not dominate in creed and practice. So it follows that all the work of the Churches not only is to be, but, unless it be palpably and perniciously unchristian or antichristian in form and tendency, *is* missionary work. In the nature of the case it must be a contribution to the enlargement of Christianity, and by so much leave less to be done in securing for Christianity universal sway.

Heathenism has acquired a technical meaning, a single reference, which is misleading in respect to the work of the Churches and the development of Christianity. Really, the fact it embodies and expresses is unaffected by place or circumstances of nativity, and the child born in the United States or England is born as much a heathen as the one born in the wilds of Africa or Asia. If there be any difference in the external appliances inceptively used to Christianize, there is no difference in the influences which internally and concurrently operate, and without which there can be no true Christianization. Heathenism is only nature, and if our familiar phrase—from nature

to grace—rightly expresses evangelical conversion, then every conversion is a conversion from heathenism, is making a Christian out of a heathen. All the agencies employed by the Churches look ultimately to the conversion of men, and, by the multiplication of conversions, to the undisputed establishment of Christ's kingdom. Hence all these agencies are strictly missionary agencies; the work for which they are engaged is missionary work.

I lay stress upon this position, because its contradiction, as I think, not only involves an uncalled-for disparagement of the Churches in what they are doing here at home, but must be harmful in retarding the occupation of the fields abroad, "already white unto the harvest." The distinction between missionary work and the ordinary work done by Christian agencies in the so-called Christian lands, between the Church in its wholeness as a missionary society, and a corporation within it known as *the* missionary society, may be admissible—is, perhaps, unavoidable. As far as our Church missionary societies are concerned, I do not wish to be understood as objecting to the arrangement which creates them, or as finding fault with their management. The agents of the Churches, fairly representing, as they are

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supposed to do, their sense of obligation and faith and zeal and liberality, they are constructively the Churches themselves. They have an important office besides the mere supervisory and administrative one which they exercise, that of enlightening and quickening the Churches on the question of duty in relation to the diffusion of the Gospel. I do not see how they could be dispensed with. But the distinction referred to, especially that between work at home and work abroad, is liable to abuse, and pains ought not to be spared in preventing the abuse. Misconceptions may grow out of it, and doubtless do, which are prejudicial to the Gospel. An example is found in the current saying, We must take care of home, as if what is geographically remote is spiritually unconnected with home, and may not ask attention until every Church debt is settled, and every sinner converted at home. The oneness of all Christian work, if not in form, yet in design—if not in outward appearance, yet in internal reality, in essence—is not disputable; it is an axiom in Christian science. The more this is insisted upon and believed, the nearer will the missionary cause, as an integral part of the work to which the Churches are pledged, and for which they are constituted—yea, as that

work itself—be brought to the hearts of Christians, the more strongly will it take hold of their consciences, the more liberally will it be provided for, and the more enthusiastically prosecuted, 'till

“Man, rising from the ruins of his fall,  
Is one with God, and God is all in all.”

With the oneness of Christian work realized, the nearer to each other, too, will the Churches come, and be helpful to each other in promoting the cause which belongs to all, and whose triumph will be the triumph of all.

It may not be presumptuous in me to suggest that, possibly, one reason, if not a principal reason, of the failure of Christians generally to appreciate the cause of missions, and give themselves and their means to it in the measure its merits deserve and demand, is a failure to make them see and feel *that it is the cause of Christianity itself*; that it is not a modern and possibly a superfluous addendum to the Gospel, but an original and indestructible part of it; that the Gospel at home and the Gospel abroad are the same, and that one cannot be slighted or sacrificed without the other suffering and going down with it; that the Church is not allowed to have a policy which contemplates

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any thing less than taking the world for Jesus ; that the question submitted to us as Christians, as Bishop Pierce of our Southern Methodism finely puts it, "is not simply whether the heathen," in the outlying regions, "can be saved without the Gospel, but whether we can be saved if we do not give it to them ;" that every minister of Jesus, on whatever continent he stands, and in whatever language he publishes the good news, is a New Testament missionary, his commission assigning him the world as his parish ; that every Church member must make the world's conversion his affair ; that business, profits, possessions, are to be labeled, "For Jesus," and so he is to show that he is fired with the missionary spirit ; that all the prayers and sermons and services of the Church are in the interest of a Gospel that is intrinsically and grandly missionary ; that our Sunday-schools are manned and managed that the world may be sooner told "the old, old story of Jesus and his love ;" that every church or chapel built heralds a new victory for our Lord and the speedier coming of his glory ; that every conversion is a new prophecy of the return of our revolted planet to Him whose right it is to reign ; that when the Churches erect and endow their schools and colleges, they are on

the line of missionary activity and conquest; that the men who are sending into society cultured Christian mind, our educators, are not only demonstrating the friendliness of the Churches to learning, the harmony of religion and science, the congruity between the richest piety and the ripest scholarship, but are augmenting the resources of every missionary society in Christendom; that all the benevolent institutions of the Churches, their asylums for the aged, the orphan, the poor, and the sick, are monumental witnesses for the sympathy of Christianity with all human woe, and point onward to, and prepare for, the blessed consummation to which it is hastening.

Such a conception of Christianity and of the work confided to the Churches, universally prevalent, inwrought into the Christian mind and conscience as their deepest and most sacred conviction, would, I am persuaded, strengthen us in all our positions at home and abroad, and we would be always ready to take new positions. It would keep us steadily on the advance, and with a rapidity of movement hitherto unknown. We need have no fear that the Churches would overlook the fields distant and destitute on the plea that they are already doing missionary work and enough of it. They

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too much overlook these fields *now*, and on this very plea. I would have them so indoctrinated and quickened as to feel that it is destitution, and not distance, they are to consider, and that the latter in itself can never be a reason for indifference. The missionary idea which I have advocated is not limited to home. It disowns and denounces as the worst kind of imposture the charity which begins at home, and stays there. It brings all fields to the Churches as home, and demands provision for them. It knows, indeed, but one field, and that is the world. It makes opportunity to do good with hands or lips or money a Divine summons to do it, and invests duty with the gratefulness and joy of privilege. It calls the Church to do all its work under the missionary impulse. It connects every plan, every movement, every dollar raised and spent, every thought, with the salvation of the race. It goes beyond our Discipline in its appointment of a monthly prayer-meeting and an annual sermon in each congregation for the cause of missions, appropriating every prayer-meeting and every prayer and every sermon to that cause.

When the mind and the heart of the Churches are thus impressed with the missionary charac-

ter of all their work, when the world's evangelization is accepted as the paramount question, and every other question is considered in the light of this overshadowing one, and decided so as to subserve it, we will be done with debts and short supplies in our missionary treasuries. The Christian pulpit and press, and those who more immediately superintend our missionary operations, must do the chief part in removing error and enforcing truth as to the oneness of our Christian work, the impossibility of rejecting or neglecting the cause of missions without rejecting and dishonoring Christianity.

*Denominationalism* has been urged as unfriendly to the success of missionary enterprise. Christianity is enfeebled, it is alleged, by the multiplicity of its representatives, and without a diminution of these, and a better understanding between them, the world's conversion must be placed among things improbable, if not impossible. "A house divided against itself cannot stand." It is concluded that Christianity, as a universal religion, must prove a failure.

That denominationalism has often hindered the progress of the Gospel no one can deny. That it must impair and impede it would be a bold, if not reckless, assertion. That the assertion can be made good, I do not believe.

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The separation of Christians into various bodies not only need not be detrimental to Christianity, but may be and ought to be directly favorable to its purity and completest efficiency. Its healthiest development may be promoted by just such a condition.

The unity which the Gospel calls for among Christians is not an outward one. It is sometimes mistakenly confounded with *union*. It is a unity of and in the spirit. It has its basis in a personal relation to Jesus as Saviour and Lord, and its manifestation in devotion to a common work.

Who can say that many Churches agreed upon the essentials of revealed truth, comprehending the world-wide philanthropy of the Gospel and doing their part in giving it to the world, recognizing and co-operating with one another as companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, are not the very expression of the mind of the Lord? Who can say that this manifoldness is not of the Spirit's inspiration? that the division of the Christian body into our evangelical denominations is not the divine plan for preserving the truth incorrupt, and evoking on the largest scale the activities of redeemed and sanctified humanity?

Difference in name does not necessarily im-

ply difference in essential faith or the object sought. Division is not necessarily destructive of substantial unity, or disadvantageous to Christianity. Variety in nature is not conflictive with the harmony of nature.

“Division,” remarks Canon Westcott, “(if we regard the imperfection of our nature,) appears to be the preliminary of that noblest catholicity, which will issue from the separate fulfillment by each part in due measure of its proper function toward the whole.” The same writer draws a forcible illustration from the division of humanity into separate and conflicting nations, as not only “not destructive of the moral unity of the whole body of mankind,” but as contributing directly to the preservation and perfection of the world’s civilization. So “separate organizations appear to be as necessary for the complete manifestation of the many sides of Christian truth in relation to man, as they are confessedly for the manifestation of national life.” There is division of labor in the dissemination of Christianity. Many Churches, cherishing one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, are better than one for this reason, if for no other—the labor can be distributed and competitively pursued so as, on the one hand, to secure the greatest ex-

pansion of resources, and, on the other, the greatest efficiency in usefully applying them.

Possibly there are more Churches than we need. Some so closely resemble as to be hardly distinguishable. Their distinctions do not amount to real differences. The common cause would probably be better served by their consolidation.

But, I confess, I am not so much concerned about the number of our Churches, as I am about their spirit and the direction they give to their energies. They cannot be damagingly in one another's way if they are consecrated to the mission of carrying the Gospel to those who are without it, and seek their growth from the vast mass of unenlightened and unsaved souls among the nations. And this is their business. Building up themselves at the expense of one another, one making itself strong by weakening another, more elated over a transferred membership from a sister Church than over a conversion from the world, going into fields already occupied and sufficiently provided with all the appliances of Christian instruction and cultivation, signifies no real gain for Christianity. The missionary effectiveness of our Churches has been too much abridged by this kind of encroachment and

interference. It is violative of all professions of confidence and fellowship; and while it is encouraged, the embraces and gushing speeches of fraternal delegates are little else than splendid exhibitions of sensation-making. The Churches were never meant to be rivals except in provoking one another to faith and good works. A more charitable recognition of one another as custodians and propagandists of a common Gospel would facilitate the success of all.

At the recent Evangelical Alliance meeting in New York, a paper was read on "Missionary Courtesy," in relation to "divisions of missionary fields of labor." Giving the word missionary its broadest application to all the aggressive work of the Churches, the courtesy which is insisted upon for the proper cultivation of the fields among the non-Christian nations is demanded in all the fields which the Churches occupy or enter. I do not argue that the several denominations should never appear together in the same community. Many communities, by reason of their populousness, call for the presence and tax the powers of many or all the Churches. I am only arguing that they should not enter and persist in staying where they are not needed, and that they

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should never operate against one another. However it may be in the foreign fields, in the home fields there is a great waste of brain force, and physical vitality, and missionary funds, in keeping up insignificant attempts to plant denominationalism, when on the spot there are those who, by pre-occupation and by ability to meet all demands, are entitled to consideration, and should not be interfered with. I speak now, of course, of our smaller communities, many of which have not a self-sustaining Church, because of the unnatural and harmful division of Christian labor, and of communities where evangelical truth is preached. Where Romanism, with her numberless abominations and other errors, which unmake the Gospel by impious additions or subtractions, are found, however strongly intrenched or vehement in protesting against interference, they offer no reason for the evangelical Churches to stay out. On the contrary, their presence is the weightiest of reasons for them to come in.

After the foregoing was written, and not knowing of a similar treatment of the subject, I discovered that Dr. Olin, in one of his masterly discussions of the missionary question, had taken this identical ground. I give a brief

extract: "When a village or neighborhood is already pre-occupied by active, spiritual denominations, and the people are well supplied with the means of grace, it is plainly a waste of means to attempt . . . to raise a new congregation for the gratification of half a dozen families who may prefer our creed or polity. Whatever else may be said in favor of such an aggressive movement, it is no proper missionary work; and resources obtained for the evangelization of the heathen, or to help the destitute, cannot, without a manifest perversion, be expended on such enterprises. Our cause is essentially weakened by the multiplication of such dependent Churches."

In extending the kingdom of our Lord, some of the Churches must necessarily lead others. They are called to do more than others, and, if faithful, will do more, because they are competent to do more. Larger capabilities compel them to assume foremost positions. All related to the work of "holding forth the word of life," until its benign influence shall reach every human being, there is, nevertheless, difference in the power resident in them, and available for making "the faith once delivered to the saints" the universal faith.

Nor is the precedence of some cause for

envious discontent among the others. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit; . . . differences of administrations, but the same Lord; . . . diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh in all." The servant who improved his two talents obtained equal honor with him who had five.

Obligation will never be met, unless there is some distinct idea of it. Where many agents are employed for an object, each should understand his part—know how far his responsibility goes. Otherwise there will be inefficiency, delay, perhaps failure. The Churches being Christ's agents for the dissemination of his Gospel, each has its part to do, and so a definite responsibility. They owe it to themselves and to each other, as well as to the Lord, to measure as nearly as possible their responsibility, to comprehend what is expected of them in furtherance of the object to which they are committed.

Nor is this so difficult as may be imagined. If an exact estimate cannot be rendered, there may be an approximation inviting and impelling to the largest faithfulness and efficiency. Each one of our Christian denominations, it seems to me, may so clearly understand the part it ought to take in bringing about the

world's evangelization at the earliest possible day, as to merit continually the Lord's commendation, "Well done, good and faithful servant." And the principle set forth in the parable of the talents is the one to which they must appeal and submit, in concluding where and to what duty calls them. If their work is the same in kind, it is not the same in amount. Not equally endowed, they are not equal in responsibility. Five talents, two talents, one talent, to each according to its ability. So responsibility is fixed. The smallest as well as the greatest, the youngest as well as the oldest, of our Christian bodies has its position established by this rule. Ability ascertains responsibility.

The manifest and humiliating disproportion between what the Churches are doing, and what they might do in giving the Gospel to the world, is the natural result of their failure to appreciate what they might do and ought to do. Dr. Angus, discussing before the Evangelical Alliance the duty of Churches to Missions, declares, "With 50,000 missionaries at work for ten years, and with £15,000,000 a year for ten years to support them, it is demonstrable that the Gospel might be preached, and preached repeatedly, to every man, woman,

and child on earth. It seems a great company, 50,000 preachers; and yet the number is not one per cent. of the members of Evangelical Churches in Christendom. There are three or four denominations in America, any one of which could supply all the preachers we need. . . . It seems a great sum, £15,000,000 sterling in ten years; yet it is less than £3 a year, \$15, from each member of Evangelical Churches in Europe and America. It would not be difficult to name ten thousand professing Christians who could give it all."

There is really no exaggeration in this statement. The fact it demonstrates is, that our Churches come far short in estimating the greatness of their opportunity, and so the greatness of their responsibility. Fully able to go up and possess the land, they seem either to distrust their ability, or to discover no urgency in the opportunity. The magnificent privilege of telling every living man of the great salvation is treated as if no wrong was done to multitudes, and no serious loss incurred by them, if they never heard of salvation. The Churches all share in the sin of omission by which the Gospel is withheld from the perishing millions of earth. There is not one of our religious denominations that is doing

its whole duty in carrying out the great commission. Resources are untouched, almost unconceived, whose utilization would insure the constant enlargement of Zion by seizure of the enemy's ground. The selfishness and slothfulness and cowardice of the wicked servant, who hid his Lord's talent in the earth, have illustration still among those in whose hands the Redeemer has placed his cause, and upon whose faithfulness he depends for its triumph.

With men combining and working together, as well as standing and working alone, self-knowledge is an immutable condition of large development and achievement. Unacquainted with their resources, the Churches will always fall behind duty in what they undertake and accomplish for the world. The law of responsibility requires them to be doing up to the limit of ability, and what that limit is they are bound to find out. Our General Conferences, and Synods, and Assemblies, and Conventions have no more important business than the adjustment of the relations of the Churches to universal evangelization. The key-note of possible achievement, and of purpose to make real the possible, should be struck in these higher Christian councils. Taking the time to ex-

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amine thoroughly, to discuss exhaustively—taking it, if need be, from the windy and wearisome speech-making that wastes so many hours, if not days, of their sessions—they should send out to their constituency appeals and submit to them methods which will be inclusive of all they may do for Christ and the race. Prayerfully, patiently; earnestly studying the situation, as it embraces the wants of mankind and the resources, material and spiritual, at command for meeting them, they should let the Churches know the power they represent, and the corresponding obligation which is upon them. They should do more than timidly suggest. It is their province positively, solemnly, authoritatively to assert duty, and summon to its fulfillment.

Let them exhibit courage and faith in projecting enterprises, both at home and abroad, somewhat commensurate with the ability of the Churches; let them speak out clearly and strongly, bringing home to every pastor, and congregation, and individual member, the great commission as binding still; let them assume in the name of Christ and the Churches their full share of responsibility in carrying it out, and estimate and indicate what they accept as their share; let them provide for organ-

ization in every department that will look directly to the employment of all available forces in furnishing the destitute with the bread of life. Then, with the Churches all in line, and all advancing for the speedy demolition of the kingdom of darkness, we may sing with newly-inspired hope and assurance,

“Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
Does his successive journeys run.”

And yet we cannot too often remind ourselves that no merely human abilities are sufficient for the ends we seek. Numbers, wealth, intelligence, social influence, are not to be left out of our reckoning of resources. But the reckoning is sadly incomplete and unpromising which stops with them. Possibly there is danger, even in our Christian enterprises, of being infected with the materialistic philosophy of the age which professes not to need “such an hypothesis as God;” danger of measuring both our ability and success by principles which, if they do not exclude the divine, exalt the human into an importance which dishonors the divine. The Master’s declaration, “Without me ye can do nothing,” should be ever before us. “Lo, I am with you alway;” this is the primary and perpetual ground of hope and

confidence. Our resources that are only visible and tangible, vast and varied though they be, fall infinitely below the demands of the work to be done. No computation of them, or of connected duty and responsibility, is of account that does not profoundly regard the presence of the enlightening and sanctifying Spirit with God's people, a divine equipment for the mission assigned them.

Said a wealthy English merchant to one of the early missionaries in India, "You will never convert the heathen; they are besotted in their prejudices, sunk in ignorance; errors have taken deep root in their character, and their grasp on them is like the grasp of a boa-constrictor." "Well," said the missionary, "with the help of God Almighty, we mean to try." "Ah," said the merchant, "if you bring God Almighty into the question, we have nothing to say."

And that is just what we do, we bring God Almighty into the question. He has made it his question, and will not be kept out of it. Because we can bring him into it, it cannot be catalogued with problematical questions. Infidelity is right in affirming the inadequacy of natural and visible appliances for the work Christianity proposes. The disparity can

hardly be exaggerated. But infidelity has only a half view. The natural is reinforced by the supernatural; the visible is allied to the invisible. In this world-saving business Almighty is a chief factor. Our Churches are depositories of spiritual power, which supplements and countervails human weakness. They are guided and inspired by Him to whom *all power* is given in heaven and on earth. Not because they have numbers or learning or wealth, but because they are baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, the gates of hell shall not prevail against them. Remembering that without Christ they can do nothing, that with him they can do all things, that faith and prayer verify all his promises of gracious help, they will be kept from undue self-dependence. Remembering that they "are laborers together with God," difficulties against which it would be madness to strive if they labored alone, cease to be formidable. However thickly their foes gather, threatening to overwhelm their feebler line, they may advance to battle, shouting, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh; (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds,) casting down imaginations, and every

high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God." And to all the jeers of an unbelieving and deluded world their quick and confounding response may be, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

What place ought Methodism, *our* Methodism, to claim as an accredited and indispensable evangelizing agency? What is her relation to Gospel diffusion? If ability regulates responsibility, what is hers in seeing that the truth be preached to every creature? I answer, The position which is forced upon her is a leading one. The part she is asked and obliged to take is a chief part. She would be untrue to herself and the common cause if she did less than her sister Churches. I am persuaded they expect her to do more.

The whole history of Methodism, which is only a continuous history of missionary activity and growth, points to her duty and responsibility. Her theology, consistently and persistently making free grace and free-will the starting-point of all doctrinal exposition; her system of government, free from hierarchical pretension or tendencies, framed, and as occasion requires modified, not for show but for effectiveness; the variety and flexibility of her instrumentalities; her itinerant ministry,

ceaselessly moving and proclaiming as it goes, "Christ for all the world and all the world for Christ;" the experimental character of her teaching, emphasizing the privilege of knowing the pardon of sin and adoption into the family of God; the fervor by which her children are every-where distinguished; her numbers, her wealth, fit her to be an example to the Churches in devotion to the salvation of men. As evangelistic energy has been her glory in the past, any relaxation now would be a shame and a crime, an evidence of apostasy hardly less in its criminality than that which Romanism illustrates. The Divine approval with which she has been so remarkably favored as a missionary Church, gathering her material raw and working it into beauty and utility, rather than taking material second-hand and so badly worked as to be incapable of much improvement, going every-where after "the multitudes, scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd," attests her election to be always a missionary Church. Ceasing to be that, her glory will leave her and be given to another.

The greatest peril of Methodism is her prosperity. Numbers, wealth, popularity, have too often in the progress of Christianity marked de-

cline in spirituality, departure from the simple truth of Christ, and prevalent and paralyzing worldliness. I do not hesitate to say that Methodism can only escape the peril of sinking into a dead formalism as she devotes herself with untiring earnestness to the spread of scriptural holiness over all lands. In keeping alive the missionary fire, she will not only save others, she will save herself. When her aggressiveness is suspended, her paralysis begins.

Much as Methodism has done and is doing, she is capable of doing more. With all the activity she displays, her resources are far from being developed and used. Especially is this true of financial ability. Almost without feeling the strain, she might treble her contributions, and be constantly increasing them, for the propagation of the Gospel in every land. Doing only what is possible, without weakening a single point where she is established, her foreign missionary forces might be quadrupled in twelve months. It cannot but be a reproach that even in these hard times her missionary treasury should be embarrassed by debt. Methodism, leading the Churches in numerical strength and the general diffusion of wealth in her membership, should lead them in her

contributions for the world's evangelization. She should not think of a less sum than a million of dollars annually for this cause.

The missionary spirit of the Churches, brethren, will not go beyond the missionary spirit of their pastors. Our faith and zeal must animate theirs. In sympathy with Christ and his purposes of saving mercy, we must be examples to all believers. We are educators of our people on this great question of converting the world. If our hearts are cold, theirs will be not less frigid. If our views are small, they will share them. If we tamely speak, they will tamely act. If our treatment of the subject is only perfunctory, they will not see its magnitude or believe in its importance. If we hint excuses for small collections on the ground of heavy current expenses or hard times, they will make the collections small enough. O, let us be awake, and bold, and broad, and earnest before the Churches on this vital question! God send upon us, as pastors of the flock of Christ, a baptism that will lead us to say with Paul, that grandest of New Testament missionaries, "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, therefore all died: and that he died for all, that they which live should not

henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

It is given to faith to anticipate the completed work of the Church. Calmly surveying the scene of conflict, it discerns the end, "the times of restitution of all things," when every tongue shall "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Knowing that its foundation is indestructible, it brings near the distant, and rejoices in victory assured, as if it were already accomplished. How enrapturing its view, as, in the light of prophecy and promise, it peers through the ages, and beholds old things passed away and all things become new! How sublime the spectacle upon which it is permitted to gaze! Creation re-created! The finished manifestation of redemption in the subjugation of Satan and overthrow of his rebellious government! The kingdoms of this world reclaimed from the usurper, and now the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ! The ruptured relations of man and God restored, and indissolubly cemented, by the blood of the everlasting covenant! Suspicion and hatred and alienation transmuted into universal love and peace and fellowship! The multitudes of the continents and isles gathered into "a glorious Church, not having

spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Error banished from the realm of thought, and the truth as it is in Jesus every-where and forever triumphant! The Crucified crowned Lord of all! The two worlds most deeply concerned in the sacrifice of Calvary vying with each other in proclaiming—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing!" The apocalyptic writer pictures the scene which opens up to faith: "And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

Brothers, to this consummation, so delightful and inspiring to contemplate, we are related. For this we live and die, that it may be hastened. Into the work of preparation we enter through the ministry we have received of the Lord Jesus. In the final blissful realization we will share, if faithful. O, be it our glory, lifting us above all the enticements and entanglements of earthly ambitions, that we are

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counted worthy of so honorable, so divine, a vocation !

“ O that each, in the day of his coming, may say,—

I have fought my way through ;

I have finished the work thou did'st give me to do.

O that each from his Lord may receive the glad word,—

Well and faithfully done !

Enter into my joy and sit down on my throne.”



